

milk-maids, and especially with Radha, his favourite mistress, are familiar to every Hindoo, being incorporated into their popular songs, and the image of Radha being placed by that of Krishnū in many of the temples. Under several other names Krishnū is worshipped, to which forms separate temples have been erected; among the rest to Gopalū, the herdsman; to Valū-gopalū, the infant Gopalū; to Gopēe-nat'hū, the lord of the milk-maids. Krishnū is one of the ten incarnations of Vishnool. The Rev. Mr. Maurice calls him 'the amiable Krishnū!'

2. *Jūgūnnat'hū*, another deified hero, complimented with the title of lord of the world, a form of Vishnool. He is honoured with several annual festivals, but the car festival is the most popular. Imitations of his ponderous car abound in many of the large towns in Bengal^o: that in Orissa, connected with the ancient temple erected in honour of this god, has crushed to death hundreds of victims, perhaps thousands, and immolates a number every year. This god receives the homage of pilgrims from all parts of India, for whose accommodation roads have

where the crowd are celebrating the praises of Krishnū; and others are said to faint with joy on these occasions. In memory of Krishnū's lewd conduct with the milk-maids in the forest of Vrindavūnū, persons of property sometimes spend a day in the fields, and entertain their friends.

* Krishnū-vūsoo gave to the temple of Jūgūnnat'hū, near Serampore, an immense car, which could not cost less than four or five thousand roopees. He also added an allowance of six roopees a day for the expenses of the worship of this idol. Gourū-mūllikū, a goldsmith of Calcutta, who gave the interest of his mother's weight in gold to different temples, added six roopees more to the daily offerings at this temple; but these two benefactors, perceiving that the bramhūns of the temple, instead of expending these sums in offerings to the god, and in alms to strangers, applied the greater part to their private use, reduced the six roopees to one roopee four anas a day. To extort more money from the donors, the bramhūns of this temple, at two succeeding festivals, prevented the car from proceeding to an adjoining temple in which the donors were interested, pretending that the god was angry with them for their parsimony, and would not go.

been cut, and lodging-houses erected. Such, however, is the great mortality among the pilgrims, that a Hindoo of property always makes his will before he sets out on this journey, and takes a most affecting farewell of his disconsolate relations. Southey's description^p, in his 'Curse of Kehama,' though not literally correct, conveys to the mind much of the horror which a Christian spectator of the procession of the car cannot but feel. Mr. Paterson finds in the images of this god, and his brother and sister, which are worshipped together, an hieroglyphic of the mystical word *Om*.

3. *Ramū*, a deified monarch, and the hero of the *Ramayānū*, comes in for a considerable share of the wretched devotion of the Hindoos, especially in the western provinces. His history, found in Valmēēkee's epic poem, is partly before the public. He is adored as the seventh Hindoo incarnation; has an annual festival, and is daily worshipped in the temples dedicated to him, his brother, and his friend *Hūnoomanū*; in which temples he appears as a green man, with a bow and arrows in his hands, sitting on a throne, having *Sēēta* on his left: his brother *Lukshmūnū* holds a white umbrella over his head, and *Hūnoomanū* stands before him as his servant with joined hands. He is considered as a beneficent deity. Some think that *Ramū* was deified

^p 'A thousand pilgrims strain,
Arm, shoulder, breast, and thigh, with might and main,
To drag that sacred wain,
And scarce can draw along the enormous load.
Prone fall the frantic votaries in its road,
And, calling on the god,
Their self-devoted bodies there they lay
To pave his chariot way;
On *Jūgūnnat'h* they call,
The ponderous car rolls on, and crushes all.
Through blood and bones it ploughs its dreadful path;
Groans rise unheard; the dying cry,
And death and agony
Are trodden under foot by yon mad throng,
Who follow close, and thrust the deadly wheels along.'

on account of a successful attack on Ceylon, when he was king of Mut'hoora.

4. *Choitūnyū*, i. e. the wise, a form of *Krishnū*; the god of a sect of *voiragēēs*, whose leader was a religious mendicant. His most famous temple in Bengal is at *Ugrū-dwēēpū*, where an annual festival is held, and to which crowds resort from all parts of Bengal. The *bramhūns* despise this sect.

5. *Vishwū-kūrmū*, the son of *Brūmha*, as architect of the gods, may be regarded as the Hindoo Vulcan. He is worshipped at an annual festival, the implements of each artificer being the representative of the god. He employs no Cyclops with one eye, but has a workman named *Mayū*, a giant, who is capable of exhibiting all manner of illusive edifices.

6. *Kamū-dēvū*, the Indian Cupid. This god is also said to be the son of *Brūmha*: he is painted as a beautiful youth, carrying a bow and arrow of flowers. He has an annual festival, but his image is not made; nor does this festival command much celebrity. Petitions are addressed to him by the bride and bridegroom anxious for offspring.

7. *Sūtyū Narayānū*. I have not discovered the origin of this idol: the name implies that he is the true Vishnū. He is worshipped frequently in the houses of the rich, from the desire of insuring prosperity.

8. *Pūnchanūnū*, a form of *Shivū*, worshipped by the lower orders, who consider him as the destroyer of children. The image used as his representative is a misshapen stone, anointed, painted, and placed under the *vūtū* and other trees.

9. *Dhūrmū-t'hakoorū*, another form of *Shivū*, held in much the same estimation as *Pūnchanūnū*.

10. *Kaloo-rayū*, the god of forests, another form of *Shivū*.

He is painted as sitting on a tiger, and carrying a bow and arrows: is worshipped by the wood-cutters in the forests, to insure protection from wild beasts.

11. *Deified Beings in strange shapes.*—*Urdhū-narēśhwūrū*. This compound deity is Shivū and Doorga united in one body. The fable respecting this singular transformation will be found in vol. i. p. 239. Religious worship is paid to this idol.—*Krishnū-Kālēē*. In this image of Krishnū and Kālēē united in one body, vice itself is personified and worshipped. See vol. i. p. 240.—*Hūree-Hūrū*. Another compound deity, Vishnū and Shivū. The worship paid to these idols appears to owe its origin to stories in the pooranūs; but the original idea, meant to be conveyed by two of them, no doubt, was, that the Great Spirit and matter are one.

12. *The worship of Human Beings.* The Hindoos worship their spiritual guides; also bramhūns, and their wives and daughters: and, among the vama-charēēs, women of the lowest cast, and even prostitutes, are worshipped with rites too abominable to be recorded. See vol. i. p. 247.

13. *The worship of Beasts.* The cow, as a form of Bhūgūvūtēē, is an object of worship, and receives the homage of the Hindoos at an annual festival^a: (see vol. i. p. 249.) *Hūnoomanū*, the monkey, has also been placed among the gods, as a form of Shivū. Temples to this god are to be seen, and in some places his image is worshipped, daily; he is even chosen by many as their guardian deity. Hūnoomanū bears some resemblance to Pan, and like

^a The very dung of the cow is eaten as an atonement for sin, and, with its urine, is used in worship. A Hindoo does not carry any thing out of his house in the morning, till he has rubbed his door-way with cow-dung. Notwithstanding this reverence, the bullocks employed in carrying burdens and at the plough, are used more cruelly by the Hindoos than any other animals. 'The Athenians and almost all other nations thought it a very great crime to kill the ox, inasmuch that the offender was thought to deserve death.' *Potter's Antiquities of Greece*, vol. i. p. 217.

him owes his birth to the god of the winds. The *dog*, the *jackal*, and a number of other animals, have also places among the Hindoo deities, though they are not greatly honoured.

14. *Worship of Birds.* Gūroorū, the carrier of Vishnōo, half a bird and half a man, has received deification, as well as his brother Uroonū, the chariotéer of Vishnōo. Jūtayoo, another bird, the friend of Ramū, receives divine honours; as do the eagle of Coromandel, (said to be an incarnation of Doorga,) the wag-tail, the peacock, the goose, and the owl; but the honours they receive are not of the highest kind.

15. *Worship of Trees.* The Hindoos do not seem ever to have consecrated groves, but several trees they esteem sacred. Toolū-sēē, a female raised to deity by Vishnōo, was cursed by Lūkshmēē, his wife, in a fit of jealousy, and turned into the tree of this name; which the Hindoos preserve with great care near their houses, erect pillars to its honour*, esteem its leaves and wood sacred, and with the latter make the beads with which they repeat the names of their guardian deities. Several other trees receive almost an equal homage: (see p. 263.) It is considered as a great sin among the Hindoos for any member of a family to cut down trees planted by an ancestor, and the misfortunes of many a family have been ascribed to such an act of indiscretion.

16. *River worship.* The Hindoos not only reverence their rivers, but actually worship them, dividing them into male and female deities. But Gūnga, (the Ganges,) both in their poems, their pooranūs, and in the superstitious customs of the natives, appears to rank highest among the river deities. She is declared to have descended from Vishnōo's heaven, the anniversary of which event is celebrated by particular festivities. The most extravagant things are related in the pooranūs respecting the

* The heads of these pillars, which commonly open like a cup, are filled with earth, and the plant is placed in them. 'The Romans and Grecians,' says Potter, 'consecrated certain trees to their gods.'

purifying nature of these waters; and several works have been written to extol the saving properties of the Ganges*. Its waters are carried to immense distances; every thing they touch becomes purified; crowds of Hindoos perform their worship on the banks of the river daily, after purifying themselves in its stream; the sick are laid on its banks, expecting recovery from the mere sight of this goddess; and it is reckoned a great calamity not to die within view of Gunga. Many other rivers receive the honours of divine worship, as will be seen in page 278.

17. *Worship of Fish.* Even the finny tribes are honoured by the Hindoos, though the worship paid to them is of an inferior nature.

18. *The worship of Books* is very common among this people. The lower orders have such a profound respect for a book, that they think every thing in such a form must be divine. On several occasions a book is converted into an image, and worshipped with all the forms used before the most popular idol.

19. *Worship of Stones.* The shalūgramū, as a form of Vishnoo, is more frequently worshipped than any other idol in India*, not excepting the lingū itself; which perhaps ought to be placed next, and which is also a stone. The representatives of Pūn-

* The Gūnga-vakya-vūlēē, &c.

* 'The shalūgramūs are black stones, found in a part of the Gūndūkēē river, within the limits of Nepal. They are mostly round, and are commonly perforated in one or more places by worms, or, as the Hindoos believe, by Vishnoo in the shape of a reptile. According to the number of perforations, and of spiral curves in each, the stone is supposed to contain Vishnoo in various characters. For example, such a stone perforated in one place only, with four spiral curves in the perforation, and with marks resembling a cow's foot, and a long wreath of flowers, contains Lūkshṃcē-Narayṇū. In like manner stones are found in the Nūrmūda, which are considered as types of Shivū, and are called Vanū-Lingū. The shalūgramū is found, upon trial, not to be calcareous: it strikes fire with steel, and scarcely at all effervesces with acids.' *Asiatic Researches*, vol vii. p. 240.

chanūnū and other gods are shapeless stones. Many images of idols sold in the markets are made of stone, and worshipped.

20. *A log of wood.* The pedal with which rice is cleansed from the husk has also been raised to godship by the Hindoos. See vol. i. p. 287.

Such are the objects adored by the Hindoos. Such is the deplorable state into which the mind continues to sink, after it has once renounced the doctrine of the UNITY OF GOD. Divine Worship is confessedly the highest act of reverence and homage of which man is capable. How shocking then, how afflicting to a philanthropic mind, to see man prostrated before a beast, or a log of wood! How greatly is the horror increased, when this prostration of intellect respects many millions!

I have repeatedly conversed with learned Hindoos on the use of idols in worship: the best account I have ever received may amount to this.—God is every where; this is allowed, but his spirituality perplexes the mind. To collect and fix the ideas on the object of adoration, therefore, an image is chosen; into which image, by the power of incantations, the deity is imagined to be drawn. Hence, in dedicating an image, they call upon the god to come and dwell in it. I have urged in reply, that if this were the whole end to be answered, any image might do^u, but that I saw amongst them many sorts of idols. To this the bramhūn says, ‘God has made himself known in these forms, and directed these various images to be made, that men may be fascinated and drawn to the love of worship; that none of these images are intended to exhibit the natural perfections of God, but his actions when incarnate; and that images are only necessary while men continue in a rude state, and may be laid aside by those who can attain to devotion by means of rational speculation.’ This is the best apology I have obtained for the worship

^u They admit this: a pan of water is indeed often substituted for an idol.

of idols. Yet, surely, instead of elevating the mind, and carrying it to a Being so glorious as God, images debase a subject so sublime, and destroy all reverence for Him, who is 'glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders.' Images of God are therefore highly offensive, and their makers and worshippers justly expose themselves to the cutting reproof of Isaiah :—' To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare to him? Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: all nations before him are as nothing, and are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.' But that idols are not necessary, even to the rude and ignorant, let the experience of every protestant country bear witness. Where shall we find piety more elevated, or morals more correct, even among individuals in the lowest orders of society, than in our own land?

But what shall we say, when many of these idols are monstrous personifications of vice; and when it is a fact, that not a single virtuous idea is ever communicated by any of them? The image of Kalēē exhibits a female with inflamed eyes, standing on the body of her husband, her hair disheveled, slavering the blood of her enemies down her bosom, her tongue hanging from her mouth, wearing a necklace of skulls, and holding a skull in the left hand, and a sword in the right. Another image, that of Krishnū-Kalēē, exhibits Krishnū and Radha, his mistress, united in one body, to conceal Radha's infidelity from her husband. Another image is the lingū! Another that of a monkey, an incarnation of 'the great god' Shivū; the offspring of the god of the winds by a female monkey*. The image of Doorga is that of a female warrior: and one form of this goddess is that of a female so athirst for blood, that she is represented as cutting off her own head; and the severed head, with the mouth distended, is seen devouring the blood streaming from the trunk. This goddess stands upon two other deities in an attitude so abominably indecent that it cannot be described: the common form of

* Pan is said to have been the son of Mercury.

Kalēē, standing on her husband Shivū, has a secret meaning, well known to a Hindoo; but which is so indelicate that even they, licentious as they are, dare not make it according to the genuine meaning of the fable to which it belongs^v. Some of the formulas used at the festival in honour of this goddess, called the Shyama-pōōja, relate to things which can never become the subject of description; but perhaps in this concealed state they are more pernicious than if painted, and exhibited to the open gaze of the mob. To this it may be added, that amidst all the numerous idols worshipped by the Hindoos, there is not one to represent any of the *Virtues*. In this respect, the Hindoo mythology sinks far below the European; for the Greeks and Romans adored Virtue, Truth, Piety, Chastity, Clemency, Mercy, Justice, Faith, Hope, and Liberty, and consecrated images and temples to these deities. Among the Hindoos, the most innocent part of the system, and that which existed in the purest ages, was the worship of the primary elements, the adoration of inanimate matter!

The manifest effect of idolatry in this country, as held up to thousands of Christian spectators, is an immersion into the grossest moral darkness, and a universal corruption of manners. The Hindoo is taught, that the image is really God, and the heaviest judgments are denounced against him, if he dare to suspect that the image is nothing more than the elements of which it is composed. The Tūntrū-sarū declares, that such an unbeliever will sink into the regions of torment. In the apprehensions of the people in general, therefore, the idols are real deities; they occupy the place of God, and receive all the homage, all the fear, all the service, and all the honours which HE so justly claims. The government of God is subverted, and all the moral effects arising from the knowledge of his perfections, and his claims upon his rational creatures, are completely lost.

^v Hindoos of the baser sort may be seen whispering to each other before this image, and dilating on that which is too filthy for *them* to utter in an audible voice.

It is a fact too, that the festivals in honour of the gods have the most pernicious effects on the minds of the people. During the ceremonies of worship before the image, the spectators are very few, and these feel no interest whatever in the mummeries going forward; and were it not for those who come to pay a visit of ceremony to the image, and to bring their offerings, the temple would be as little crowded on festival, as on common days: but as soon as the well-known sound of the drum is heard, calling the people to the midnight orgies, the dance and the song, whole multitudes assemble, and almost tread one upon another; and their joy keeps pace with the number of loose women present, and the broad obscenity of the songs. Gopalū-Türkālūnkarū, a pundit employed in the Serampore printing-office, and a very respectable man among the Hindoos, avowed to a friend of mine, that the only attractives on these occasions were the women of ill-fame, and the filthy songs and dances; that these songs were so abominable, that a man of character, even amongst them, was ashamed of being present; that if ever he (Gopalū) remained, he concealed himself in a corner of the temple. He added, that a song was scarcely tolerated which did not contain the most marked allusions to unchastity; while those which were so abominable that no person could repeat them out of the temple, received the loudest plaudits². All this is done in the very face of the idol; nor does the thought, 'Thou God seest me,' ever produce the slightest pause in these midnight revels. In open day, and in the most public streets of a large town, I have seen men entirely naked, dancing with unblushing effrontery before the idol, as it was carried in triumphant procession, encouraged by the smiles and eager gaze of the bramhūns. Yet sights even worse than these, and such as can never be described by the pen of a Christian writer, are exhibited on the rivers and in the public roads, to thousands of spectators, at the

² Sometimes the Hindoos open a subscription to defray the expense of a grand act of worship in honour of some idol. If 400 roopees be subscribed on such an occasion, I am assured, that 300 will be spent on the songs and dancing-girls.

Doorga festival^a, the most popular and most crowded of all the Hindoo festivals in Bengal; and which closes with libations to the gods so powerful, as to produce general intoxication. What must be the state of morals in a country, when its religious institutions and public shows, at which the whole population is present, thus sanctify vice, and carry the multitude into the very gulph of depravity and ruin !

There is another feature in this system of idolatry, which increases its pernicious effects on the public manners:—The history of these gods is a highly coloured representation of their wars, quarrels, and licentious intrigues; which are held up in the images, recitations, songs, and dances at the public festivals. At the separate recitations, which are accompanied with something of our pantomime, these incredible and most indecent fables are made still more familiar to the people; so familiar indeed, that allusions to them are to be perceived in the most common forms of speech. Many works of a pernicious tendency in the European languages are not very hurtful, because they are too scarce and expensive to be read by the poor; but the authors of the Hindoo mythology have taken care, that the quarrels and revels of the gods and goddesses shall be held up to the imitation of the whole community.

In some of these histories and pantomimes Shivū is represented as declaring to Lūkshmiē, that he would part with all the merit of his works for the gratification of a criminal passion; Brūmha as burning with lust towards his own daughter; Krishnū as living with the wife of another, murdering a washerman and stealing his clothes, and sending his friend Yoodhist'hirū to the regions of torment by causing him to utter a falsehood; Indrū and Chūndrū are seen as the paramours of the wives of their spiritual guides.—But these stories are so numerous in the poo-

^a The author has more than once been filled with alarm, as this idolatrous procession has passed his house, lest his children should go to the windows, and see the gross obscenity exhibited by the dancers.

ramūs, that it seems unnecessary to drag more of them to light. The thing to be deplored is, that the Hindoo objects of worship were themselves monsters of vice.

Painful as this is, it is not all: there is a numerous and growing sect among the Hindoos in Bengal, and perhaps in other provinces, who, in conformity with the rules prescribed in the works called Tūntrū, practise the most abominable rites. The proselytes to this sect are chiefly brahmūns, and are called vama-charēēs. I have given some account of them in vol. i. p. 247. and vol. ii. p. 92. and should have declined blotting these pages with any further allusion to these unutterable abominations, had I not omitted in those accounts an article which I had prepared, and which throws much additional light on the practices of a sect so singularly corrupt.

The rules of this sect are to be found more or less in most of the Tūntrūs; but particularly in the Nēēlū, Roodrū-yamūlū, Yonee, and Unnūda-kūlpū. In these works the writers have arranged a number of Hindoo sects as follows:—Védacharēēs, Voishnūvacharēēs; Shoivacharēēs, Dūkshinacharēēs, Vamacharēēs, Siddhantacharēēs, and Koulacharēēs; each rising in succession, till the most perfect sect is the Koulacharū. When a Hindoo wishes to enter into this sect, he sends for a person who has been already initiated, and who is well acquainted with the forms of initiation; and presenting to him garments, ornaments, &c. begs him to become his religious guide. The teacher then places this disciple near him for three days, and instructs him in the ceremonies of the sect: at the close of which period, the disciple spreads some loose soil on the floor of the house in which the ceremonies of initiation are to be performed; and sows a small quantity of barley, and two kinds of pease, in this soil, sprinkling water upon it. He next proceeds to perform some parts of the ten ceremonies practised by the regular Hindoos from the time of birth to that of marriage: after which he makes a declaration, that he has from that period renounced all the ceremonies of the old religion, and is delivered from their

yoke; and as a token of joy celebrates what is called the Vriddhee shraddhū. All these ceremonies are to be performed in the day; what follows is to be done in darkness: and therefore, choosing the darkest part of the night, the seed sown in the house having sprung up, the disciple and his spiritual (it would not be too harsh to say infernal) guide enter the house, with eight men, (vamacharēēs,) and eight females, (a dancing-girl, a weaver's daughter, a woman of ill-fame, a washer-woman, a barber's wife or daughter, a bramhūnēē, the daughter of a land-owner, and a milkmaid.) Each of the vamacharēēs is to place by his side one of the females, and the teacher and his disciple are to sit close to each other. The teacher now informs his disciple, that from henceforward he is not to indulge shame, nor dislike to any thing, nor prefer one plan to another, nor regard ceremonial cleanness or uncleanness, nor cast; and that, though he may freely enjoy all the pleasures of sense, the mind must be fixed on his guardian deity: that is, he is neither to be an epicure nor an ascetic, but to blend both in his character; and to make the pleasures of sense, that is, wine and women, the medium of obtaining absorption into Brūmha; since women are the representatives of the wife of Cupid, and wine prevents the senses from going astray. A pan of spirits, or of water mixed with spirits, is placed near each man and woman; and in the centre another pan of spirits, different kinds of flesh, (of which that of the cow makes a part,) rice, fruits, &c. and upon each of the eight pans different branches of trees, and garlands of red flowers are placed; the pans also are to be marked with red paint: all these are surrounded with eighty pounds of flour formed into different colours. A pan of intoxicating beverage, called siddhee, is next consecrated; of which each partakes: after which they chew the panū leaf. Next, before all the things placed in the centre of the room, the spiritual guide rehearses the common ceremonies of worship, addressing them to any one of the female deities who happens to be the guardian deity of this disciple. The vessels from which the company are to drink, and the offerings, are next consecrated: these vessels may be formed of earth, copper, brass, silver, gold, or stone, the cocoa-

nut, or a human skull; but the latter is to be preferred. The spiritual guide then gives as much as a wine glass of spirits to each female, as the representative of the divine energy; and the men drink what they leave. At this time the spiritual guide declares, that in the sūtyū yoogū the people were directed in their religious duties by the védūs, in the trētū by the writings of the learned, in the dwapūrū by the different pooranūs, and, in the kūlee yoogū, the tūntrūs are the only proper guides to duty. As if well pleased with this sentiment, each one of the company now drinks two more glasses of the spirits. The disciple next worships each male and female separately, applying to them the names of Bhoirūvū and Bhoirūvēē, titles given to Shivū and Doorga, and presents to each of them spirits, meat-offerings, garments, ornaments, &c.; after which the spiritual guide offers a burnt-sacrifice, with the flesh and other meat-offerings, pouring on them, as they burn, clarified butter: the disciple also repeats the same ceremony. The eight females now anoint the disciple by sprinkling upon him, with the branches which were placed on the pan, spirits and water; and after mixing together the whole of the spirits, or spirits and water, from all the pans, the spiritual guide, with all the branches, again sprinkles the disciple: to whom he declares that he has now, for the good of his soul, instructed him, according to the commandment of the great god Shivū, in all the ceremonies belonging to the profession of a vama-charēē; urging him, in practising these ceremonies, to keep his mind on Shivū, and that he will be happy after death: at the close, he causes him to drink the liquor thus mixed, repeating separate incantations. During his initiation he is not to drink so as to appear intoxicated, or to cause his mind to wander; but having habituated himself to a small quantity, he may take more, till he falls down in a state of intoxication; still however so as to rise again after a short interval: after which he may continue drinking the nectar, till he falls down completely overcome, and remains in this state of joy, thinking upon his guardian deity. He is now known as an Uvūdhōtū, that is, as one who has renounced all secular affairs; and receives a new name, perhaps Anūndū-nat'hū, or the joyous.

He is to drink spirits with all of the same profession ; to sleep constantly in a house of ill-fame ; and to eat of every thing he pleases, and with all casts indiscriminately. The next thing is to offer a burnt-sacrifice ; after which the spiritual guide and the guests are dismissed with presents, and the new disciple spends the night with an infamous female. These vamacharēes adore the sex, and carefully avoid offending a woman. They also practise the most debasing rites, using the heads of persons who have been guilty of suicide, also when sitting on a dead body, and while naked and in the presence of a naked female.—It might seem impossible to trace ceremonies gross as these to any principle except that of moral depravity ; but the authors of this system attempt to reconcile it with the pursuit of future happiness. The reader is aware that the regular Hindoo theologians attribute all the vices to the passions, and consider their subjugation, or annihilation, as essential to final beatitude ; they therefore aim at the accomplishment of this object by means of severe bodily austerities. The vamacharēes profess to seek the same object, not by avoiding temptation, and starving the body, but by blunting the edge of the passions with excessive indulgence. They profess to triumph over the regular Hindoos, reminding them that *their* ascetics are safe only in forests, and while keeping a perpetual fast ; but that *they* subdue their passions in the very presence of temptation.

Thus, that which to the Hindoo should be divine worship, is the great source of impiety and corruption of manners : and, instead of returning from his temple, or from religious services, improved in knowledge, grieved for his moral deficiencies, and anxious to cultivate a greater regard to the interests of morality and religion, his passions are inflamed, and his mind polluted to such a degree, that he carries the pernicious lessons of the temple, or the festival, into all the walks of private life. His very religion becomes his greatest bane, and where he should have drank of the water of life, he swallows the poison that infallibly destroys him.

In conversation with a learned bramhūn, in the year 1813, he acknowledged to the author, that, at present, reverence for the gods made no part of the attractions to the public festivals. One man celebrates a festival to preserve himself from disgrace, another to procure the applauses of his countrymen, and a third for the sake of the songs, dances, &c. This bramhūn instanced cases of images being made without any reference to the rules of the shastrū. At one place, a Hindoo, having prepared an image, at an expense which he could not meet, permitted it to be broken, and its head, arms, and legs to be trodden upon in the streets;—another, who had been thus disappointed, threw the image into the water;—and a third, having made an enormous image, had fastened it to a cart, but on the first motion of the vehicle, the head of the idol had fallen off, and the rest of the image was permitted to lie in the street as a dead carcase. I give these instances, to confirm what I have already said, that it is not devotion that leads the Hindoo to the temple, but a licentious appetite; and to afford another proof, that idolatry always tends to sink, but never to raise its votaries. In the account of Kalēē, (vol. i. p. 153,) the reader will find a fact respecting the execution of two Hindoos, who, when under sentence of death, became Roman Catholics, in pure revenge upon Kalēē; who did not, as she was believed to have done in many other cases, protect them in the act of robbery. One of the pūndits who assisted me in this work begged, if I mentioned this fact, that I would assure the English reader, that although this goddess assisted public robbers, she always informed them that they must suffer hereafter for their crimes, though she did assist them in their perpetration.

The Reverend Mr. Maurice seems astonished that a people so mild, so benevolent, so benignant as the Hindoos, 'who (quoting Mr. Orme) *shudder at the very sight of blood*,' should have adopted so many bloody rites. But are these Hindoos indeed so humane?—these men, and women too, who drag their dying relations to the banks of the river at all seasons, day and night, and expose them to the heat and cold in the last agonies of

death, without remorse;—who assist men to commit self-murder, encouraging them to swing with hooks in their backs, to pierce their tongues and sides, to cast themselves on naked knives, to bury themselves alive^b, throw themselves into rivers^c, from precipices^d, and under the cars of their idols;—who murder their own children, by burying them alive, throwing them to the alligators, or hanging them up alive in trees for the ants and crows before their own doors^e, or by sacrificing them to the Ganges;—who burn alive, amidst savage shouts, the heart-broken widow, by the hands of her own son, and with the corpse of a deceased father^f;—who every year butcher thousands of

^b ‘Instances are not unfrequent, where persons afflicted with loathsome and incurable diseases, have caused themselves to be buried alive.’ *Asiatic Researches*, vol. vii. p. 257.

^c Mr. W. Carey, of Cutwa, in a letter to the author, dated the 4th of November, 1814, says, ‘Two or three days ago I witnessed a scene more shocking than any I ever saw in this place:—A poor weaver was brought here, and cast into the water, with a pan of water tied round his waist to make him sink; but providentially the river was shallow, and he was taken out, after being in the water a day and a night. Hearing of the circumstance, I went to see him, and found the poor man only affected with rheumatic pains. I had him brought to my house, but could not prevail on the unfeeling natives to carry him up till I procured an order from an officer of the police. I hope he will be restored to health in a fortnight, when he will return home, with some knowledge of the gospel. What adds to the horror of this narration, is, that the perpetrators of this intended murder were the mother and brother of this unfortunate Hindoo.’

^d ‘A very singular practice prevails among the lowest tribes of the inhabitants of Berar and Gondwānū. Suicide is not unfrequently vowed by such persons in return for boons solicited from idols; and to fulfil his vow, the successful votary throws himself from a precipice named Kalū-Bhoirūvū, situated in the mountains between the Taptee and Nūrmūda rivers. The annual fair, held near that spot at the beginning of spring, usually witnesses eight or ten victims of this superstition.’ *Asiatic Researches*, vol. vii. p. 257.

^e I fancy this is done when the child is born with bad omens, or is supposed to be afflicted by some evil spirit.

^f At Benares and near Buxar numerous brick monuments have been

animals, at the call of superstition, covering themselves with their blood, consigning their carcasses to the dogs, and carrying their heads in triumph through the streets?—Are these the ‘benignant Hindoos?’—a people who have never erected a charity-school, an alms'-house, nor an hospital; who suffer their fellow-creatures to perish for want before their very doors, refusing to administer to their wants while living, or to inter their bodies, to prevent their being devoured by vultures and jackals, when dead; who, when the power of the sword was in their hands, impaled alive, cut off the noses, the legs, and arms of culprits; and inflicted punishments exceeded only by those of the followers of the mild, amiable, and benevolent Booddhū in the Burman empire*! and who very often, in their acts of pillage, murder

erected to perpetuate the memory of women who have been burnt alive with the bodies of their deceased husbands.

* It is well known, that the Burmans are the followers of Booddhū, whose principal aim was to excite in mankind a horror of shedding blood, and of destroying animal life. The following facts will show how much humanity there is among a people far exceeding the Hindoos in their care not to injure whatever contains life. Mr. B. Carey thus writes to his friends in Bengal:—‘I will now relate what has taken place in this single town of Rangoon since my residence in this country, which does not exceed four years. Some of the criminals I saw executed with my own eyes; the rest I saw immediately after execution. One man had melted lead poured down his throat, which immediately burst out from the neck, and various parts of the body. Four or five persons, after being nailed through their hands and feet to a scaffold, had first their tongues cut out, then their mouths slit open from ear to ear, then their ears cut off, and finally their bellies ripped open. Six people were crucified in the following manner: their hands and feet were nailed to a scaffold; their eyes were then extracted with a blunt hook; and in this condition they were left to expire: two died in the course of four days; the rest were liberated, but died of mortification on the sixth or seventh day. Four persons were crucified, viz. not nailed, but tied with their hands and feet stretched out at full length, in an erect posture, in which they were to remain till death; every thing they wished to eat was ordered them, with a view to prolong their lives and misery. In cases like this, the legs and feet of the criminals begin to swell and mortify at the expiration of three or four days; some are said to live in this state

the plundered, cutting off their limbs with the most cold-blooded apathy, turning the house of the murdered into a disgusting shambles!—Some of these cruelties, no doubt, arise out of the religion of the Hindoos, and are the poisoned fruits of superstition, rather than the effects of natural disposition: but this is equally true respecting the virtues which have been so lavishly bestowed on this people. At the call of the shastrû, the Hindoo gives water to the weary traveller during the month Voishakhû; but he may perish at his door without pity or relief from the first of the following month, no reward being attached to such an act after these thirty days have expired. He will make roads, pools of water, and build lodging-houses for pilgrims and travellers; but he considers himself as making a good bargain with the gods in all these transactions. It is a fact, that there is not a road in the country made by Hindoos except a few which lead to holy places; and had there been no future rewards held out for such acts of merit, even these would not have existed. Before the kûlee-yoogû it was lawful to sacrifice cows; but the man who does it now, is guilty of a crime as heinous as that of killing a bramhûn: he may kill a buffalo, however, and Doorga will reward him with heaven for it. A Hindoo, by any direct act,

for a fortnight, and expire at last from fatigue and mortification. Those which I saw were liberated at the end of three or four days. Another man had a large bamboo run through his belly, which put an immediate end to his existence. Two persons had their bellies ripped up, just sufficient to admit of the protrusion of a small part of the intestines; and after being secured by the hands and feet at full stretch with cords, were placed in an erect posture upon bamboo rafters, and set adrift in the river, to float up and down with the tide for public view. The number of those who have been beheaded I do not exactly recollect; but they must be somewhere between twenty and thirty. One man was sawn to death, by applying the saw to the shoulder bone, and sawing right down until the bowels gushed out. One woman was beat to death with a large cudgel.—These are most of the punishments I have seen and heard of during my stay in this place; but many other instances happened during my absence, which I have not related. As for the crimes for which these punishments were inflicted, I shall only add, the crimes of some deserved death, some were of a trivial nature, and some of the victims were quite innocent.'

should not destroy an insect, for he is taught that God inhabits even a fly: but it is no great crime if he should permit even his cow to perish with hunger; and he beats it without mercy, though it be an incarnation of Bhūgūvūtē—it is enough, that he does not really deprive it of life; for the indwelling Brāmhū feels no stroke but that of death. The Hindoo will utter falsehoods that would knock down an ox, and will commit perjuries so atrocious and disgusting, as to fill with horror those who visit the courts of justice; but he will not violate his shastrū by swearing on the waters of the Ganges.

Idolatry is often also the exciting cause of the most abominable frauds. Several instances are given in this work: one will be found in vol. i. p. 122. and another respecting an image found under ground by the raja of Nūdēya, in vol. i. p. 203^h.

Indeed keeping gods is even a trade among the Hindoos: the only difficulty to be overcome, is that of exciting attention to the image. To do this, the owner of the image frequently goes from village to village, to call the attention of the neighbourhood: he also persuades some one to proclaim, that he has been warned in a dream to perform vows to this image; or he repeats to all he sees, that such and such cures have been performed by it. In the years 1807 and 1808, almost all the sick and imaginary sick Hindoos in the south of Bengal presented their offerings to an image called Tarūk-éshwūrū, at a place bearing this name. The brāmhūns owning this image became rich. This excited the attention of some brāmhūns near Nūdēya, who proclaimed another image of Shivū, in their possession, to be 'the brother of Tarūk-eshwūrū;' and the people of those parts flocked to this image as others had done to the original one.

The author has devoted a volume of this work to the gods.

^h Plutarch says, that Romulus, when he instituted the Ludi Consuales, to surprise the Sabine virgins, gave out, that he had discovered the altar of the god Consus hid under ground; which discovery attracted great multitudes to the sacrifice.

The next article relates to the Hindoo temples, none of which appear to be distinguished for the elegance of their architecture: they are not the work of a people sunk in barbarism; neither will they bear any comparison with the temples of the Greeks or Romans¹. They are not constructed so as to hold a crowd of worshippers, who are always accommodated in an area opposite the temple. The room in which the idol is placed is considered sufficiently spacious if it hold the officiating priest, the utensils for worship, and the offerings.

These temples answer none of the ends of a lecture room, nor of a Christian temple. Here the passions are never raised to heaven by sacred music, nor by the voices of a large and devout congregation celebrating the praises of the Deity in the strains of sacred poetry; here no devout feelings are awakened by the voice of prayer and confession, nor are the great truths of religion explained, or enforced upon the mind of an attentive crowd by the eloquence of a public speaker: the daily worship at the temple is performed by the solitary priest with all the dulness, carelessness, and insipidity necessarily connected with a service always the same, repeated before an idol made of a cold stone, and in which the priest has no interest whatever; and when the crowd do assemble before the temple, it is to enter upon orgies which destroy every vestige of moral feeling, and excite to every outrage upon virtue.

The dedication of a temple is a work of great ceremony^k, if

¹ We learn from the *Ain Akburee*, however, that the entire revenues of Orissa, for twelve years, were expended on erecting a temple to the sun.—*Maurice's Indian Antiquities*.

^k Circumambulating a temple is an act of merit, raising the person to a place in the heaven of the god or goddess whose temple he thus walks round. At Benares the devout do it daily. If the circumambulator be a learned man, he repeats the praise of the god as he is walking, and bows to the image every time he arrives at the door of the temple. The ignorant merely walk round, and make the bow. The right hand is always kept towards the object circumambulated.

the building belong to a man of wealth ; the expense incurred in presents to the bramhūns and others is also very great. The person who employs his wealth in this manner is considerably raised in the estimation of his countrymen: he frequently also endows the temple, as well as raises it ; which is generally done by grants of land. The annual produce of the land thus bestowed, is expended in wages to the officiating priest, in the daily offerings to the idol, and in lighting and repairing the temple. Many temples, however, do not depend entirely on their endowments: they receive considerable sums from occasional offerings, and from what is presented at festivals¹. Some temples are supported at an expense so trifling as to astonish a reader not acquainted with the forms of idolatry: many individuals who officiate at temples obtain only the offerings, the value of which does not amount, in many instances, to more than twenty shillings a year. Some few temples are, however, splendidly endowed, and many families receive their maintenance from them. Where an idol has become very famous, and the offerings have amounted to a large sum, even kings have been anxious to lay hold of such a source of revenue.

The images of the gods may be made of almost all the metals, as well as of wood, stone, clay, &c. Most of the permanent images are made of wood or stone; those which are destroyed at the close of a festival, are made of clay. Small images of brass, silver, and gold, are not uncommon. The sculpture of the stone images resembles that of the Popish images of the 12th century; those cast in brass, &c. exhibit a similar progress of the arts. The consecration of an image is accompanied with a number of ceremonies, the most singular of which is that of conveying sight and life to the image, for which there are appropriate formulas, with prayers, inviting the deity to come and

¹ In the year 1809, at the temple of Jūgūnnat'hū, near Serampore, at the car festival, about 570 roopees were presented to the idol, in vegetables, fruits, sweetmeats, garments, and money. About 150 bramhūns, 50 females, and 150 shoōdrūs, were entertained daily; and, at the close of the festival, the priests of the temple received 420 roopees.

dwell in it. After this ceremony, the image becomes sacred, and is carefully guarded from every offensive approach. The shastrs contain directions for making idols, and the forms of meditation used in worship contain a description of each idol: but in many instances these forms are disregarded, and the proprietor, though compelled to preserve the identity of the image, indulges his own fancy. Some images are very diminutive, especially those made of the precious metals; but others, if for temporary use, are very large: a stone image of the lingü is to be seen at Benares, which six men with joined hands can hardly grasp. At the festival of Kartikéyü, the god of war, an image is sometimes made thirty cubits high. Whatever may have been the case in other countries, idolatry in this has certainly not contributed to carry the arts of painting or sculpture to any perfection.

Any bramhün, properly qualified by rank and knowledge, may officiate in a temple, and perform the general work of a priest. There is no order of bramhüns to whom the priesthood is confined^m: many bramhüns employ others as priests; a shōōdrü must employ a bramhün, but he has his own choice of the individual; he cannot repeat a single formula of the védüs himself without being guilty of the highest offence. There are different offices in which priests are employed; but any bramhün, properly qualified, may perform the ceremonies attached to them all: (see vol. ii. p. 16.) In general, a family, able to bear the expense, employs a priest on a regular allowance: some priests are retained by many families of the same cast; such a person is called the joiners' priest, or the weavers' priest, &c. The bramhüns employed as priests to the shōōdrüs are not in high estimation among their brethren, who never fail to degrade the shōōdrü

^m I insert a short extract from Bryce's 'Sketch of the State of British India,' in order to assure the author, that, as it respects Bengal, it is wholly without foundation. 'The laws have always confined a certain proportion of bramhüns to the service of the pagodas, to the education of youth, and to study.' p. 57. 'No pains are spared in rendering accomplished those females, who, as the fascinating instruments of superstition, are employed in the service of their temples.' p. 54.

in every stage and state of life. The fees of the priest are in general very small: on some occasions, at the dedication of a temple, at the ceremonies for the dead when performed for a rich man, at the great festivals, &c. the priest receives very liberal presents. Female priests are almost unknown to the Hindoos; one or two instances are recorded in vol. i. pp. 232, 235.

The ceremonies at the temples are in most cases performed daily, morning, noon, and evening, at which times food is presented to the idol: the services are short, consisting of a few forms of petition and praise; during the presentation of flowers, leaves, and (except to Shivū) a few articles of food, the priest is commonly the only person present. The doors of the lingū temples are generally open all day; multitudes of these temples are never honoured with worship, though they contain an idol: this is accounted for by there being several of these temples erected in one spot belonging to the same individual. Hindoos in general bow to the image as they pass the temple, whether the doors be open or shut. Where the deity is honoured by bloody sacrifices, a post is erected in front of the temple, for the slaughter of animals. No assemblies can be formed in these edifices; but on particular occasions the people are collected before the door, and sit or stand under an awning. The idols in honour of Vishnōo are laid down to sleep in the day, if the image be not too large;—a poor compliment to a god, that he wants rest. The utensils employed in the ceremonies at the temples are, several dishes to hold the offerings, a hand bell, a lamp, jugs for holding water, an incense dish, a copper cup to receive drink-offerings for deceased ancestors and the gods, another smaller one to pour from, a seat of kooshū grass for the priest, a large metal plate used as a bell, and a conch or shell. All these articles do not cost more than twenty shillings, unless the owner wish them to be costly.

Daily, weekly, monthly, and annual ceremonies abound among this people, to whom may truly be applied the remark of Paul

to the Athenians, (Acts xvii. 22;) the festivals are noted in the Hindoo almanacks, and are generally held at the full or total wane of the moon. In the month of February, they have one festival in honour of the goddess of learning, Sūrūswūtēē, which continues one day. In March three, in honour of Shivū, Krishnū, and Gūnga. In April two; one on the anniversary of the birth of Ramū, and the other the horrid swinging festival. In June two; one in honour of Gūnga, and the other Jūgūnat'hū's car festival; the latter is again revived in July, when the car returns to the temple. In August the cow is worshipped, and the birth of Krishnū celebrated. In September the memory of deceased ancestors is commemorated, and the Doorga festival held. In October one, in honour of the goddess Rūtūntēē; and in November another, in honour of Kartikéyū, the god of war. On all these occasions the public offices are closed; but many other holidays are kept by the Hindoos, which are not honoured as public festivals.

The reader will find, in vol. ii. p. 27. an account of the daily duties of a bramhūn; by which it appears, that if he strictly conform to the rules of his religion, he must spend almost his whole time in religious ceremonies. The present race of bramhūns curtail these ceremonies, especially those engaged in secular affairs, who spend perhaps ten or twenty minutes in the morning, after their ablutions, in repeating the usual formulas before the lingū, or the stone called the shalūgramū, or a pan of water. Many, however, content themselves with bathing, and repeating the name of their guardian deity.

The form of initiation into the service of a person's guardian deity consists in giving him the name of this deity, and exhorting him to repeat it continually. The ceremony of initiation is given in vol. ii. p. 38. From this time, the initiated becomes entitled to all the privileges of the Hindoo religion, is placed under the protection of the gods, and receives the benediction of his spiritual guide. The Hindoos are careful to conceal the words

of initiation, and do not wish to declare to strangers what god they have chosen for their guardian deity.

The spiritual guide, who is chosen by the person himself, receives the highest reverence from the disciple, and is sometimes worshipped by him as a god. Disobedience to this guide is one of the highest offences a Hindoo can commit, and his anger is dreaded more than that of the gods. When the disciple approaches him, he prostrates himself at his feet, and the priest places his foot on his head. To such a state of degradation does the Hindoo superstition reduce the people ! These priests are notorious for covetousness and impurity : some of them plunder the disciples of their all, and others violate the chastity of their wives. They are not distinguished by any particular dress, nor do they perform any offices of worship for their disciples.

Bathing in the Ganges, or in some other sacred river, or pool, is one of the most constant and necessary duties enjoined upon the Hindoos : the bramhūns, after bathing, frequently complete their devotions on the banks of the river ; others go home, and repeat the requisite forms before the shalāgramū, or a pan of water. The people are taught that bathing is a religious ceremony, by which they become purified from sinⁿ ! They are never directed to bathe to promote bodily health. In the act of bathing, they pour out drink-offerings to deceased ancestors.—

ⁿ And yet so far are the Hindoos from having any moral feelings, even in their acts of *purification*, that few men bathe in a retired situation : the majority choose those places to which the female bathers resort, and on their account remain in the water long beyond the time necessary for their ablutions. Many an infamous assignment is made by looks, &c. while they are thus washing away their sins. A number of bramhūns engage as cooks to opulent families, to facilitate their licentious intrigues : this is become so common, that the bramhūns, proverbially known by the name of cooking bramhūns, are treated with the greatest suspicion by those who care for the chastity of their wives. *Multitudes of bramhūns likewise are employed as priests to prostitutes*, and actually perform the offices of religion in houses of ill-fame ;—so completely absent is the moral principle from the religion of the Hindoos !

To be convinced how entirely the present race of Hindoos are influenced by the promises of salvation held out in their sacred books on this subject, it is only necessary for a person to attend to what is passing around him, viz. to the crowds bathing at the landing-places of the Ganges; to the persons bearing the sacred water into distant countries, in vessels suspended from their shoulders; to the straddhūs, and other religious ceremonies performed on its banks; to the number of temples on both sides of the river; to so great a part of the Bengal population having erected their habitations near the river; to the number of brick landing-places, built as acts of holiness, to assist the people in obtaining the favour of Gūnga; to the houses erected for the sick by the sides of the river; to the people bringing their sick relations, and laying them on bedsteads, or on the ground, by the side of the Ganges, waiting to burn them there, and to throw their ashes into the river; to the immense crowds on the banks, waiting for a junction of the planets, at which moment they plunge into the stream with the greatest eagerness; to the people committing the images of their gods to the sacred stream, at the close of their festivals; and, finally, to the boats crowded with passengers going to Sagūr island (Gūnga-sagūrū) every year^o.

The forms of worship (pōōja^p) before the idol are particularly

- Till lately, people used to throw themselves, or their children, to the alligators at this place, under the idea that dying at Gūnga-sagūrū, in the jaws of an alligator, was the happiest of deaths. This is now prevented by a guard of sepoy's sent by government.

¶ The Ain Akbūree says, the Hindoos 'divide pōōja into sixteen ceremonies. After the devotee has performed his usual and indispensable ablutions, with the sundhya and homū, he sits down, looking towards the east or the north, with his legs drawn up in front. Then, taking in his hand a little water and rice, he sprinkles the idol, and conceives this act to be a proper preface to the commencement of his adoration. Next follows the worship of the idol's flagon. Then succeeds the worship of the conch-shell. Last in order, a ceremony which consists in plastering the bell with ashes of sandal-wood. When he has finished, he throws down a little rice, and wishes that his god may be manifested. These various

laid down in vol. ii. p. 64. The priest who officiates has the common dress of a bramhūn; it must, however, be clean: he has occasionally one or two bramhūns to assist him in presenting the offerings.

duties are all comprised in the first of the sixteen ceremonies.—In the second, he prepares and places a table of metal, either gold, silver, or copper, as a seat or throne for a deity.—In the third, he throws water into a vessel to wash his feet; for in Hindoost'hanū it is the custom, that, when a superior enters the house of an inferior, he washes his feet.—In the fourth, he sprinkles water thrice, to represent the idol rinsing his mouth, since it is also the custom for an inferior to bring to a superior water to rinse his mouth with before meals.—In the fifth, sandal, flowers, betel, and rice are offered to the idol.—In the sixth, the idol and his throne are carried to another spot: then the worshipper takes in his right hand a white conch-shell full of water, which he throws over the idol, and with his left hand rings the bell.—In the seventh, he wipes the idol dry with a cloth, replaces it upon its throne, and adorns it with vestments of silk or gold stuff.—In the eighth, he puts the zennar upon the idol.—In the ninth, he makes the tiluk upon the idol in twelve places.—In the tenth, he throws over the idol flowers or green leaves.—In the eleventh, he fumigates it with perfumes.—In the twelfth, he lights a lamp with ghēe.—In the thirteenth, he places before the idol trays of food, according to his ability; which are distributed among the by-standers, as the holy relics of the idol's banquet.—In the fourteenth, he stretches himself at full length with his face towards the ground, and disposes his body in such a manner, as that his eight members touch the ground, namely, the two knees, two hands, forehead, nose, and cheeks. These kinds of prostration are also performed to great men in Hindoost'hanū.—In the fifteenth, he makes a circuit around the idol several times.—In the sixteenth, he stands in the posture of a slave, with his hands uplifted, and asks permission to depart.—At some of the great festivals, boys in play make an image, paint it, and beg from house to house for the offerings, as rice, fruits, &c. When all things are ready, some one becomes the priest, and performs the ceremonies. Thus early are the Hindoo children initiated into their idolatrous rites. If, however, the parents of these children discover what is going on, they forbid it, and warn the children, that the god will be displeased. If it be an image of Kalēe, or any ferocious deity, they endeavour to terrify the children, by telling them that the goddess is a fury, and will certainly devour them. If any elderly boy be concerned, and the image made be a good one, the parents will sometimes, rather than destroy it, call a bramhūn, and have the ceremonies performed in a regular way.

Short forms of praise and prayer to the gods^a are continually used, and are supposed to promote very highly a person's spiritual interests. The following is an example of praise addressed to Gūnga :—‘ O goddess, the owl that lodges in the hollow of a tree on thy banks, is exalted beyond measure ; while the emperor, whose palace is far from thee, though he may possess a million of stately elephants, and may have the wives of a million of conquered enemies to serve him, is nothing.’ Example of prayer :—‘ O god ! I am the greatest sinner in the world ; but thou, among the gods, art the greatest saviour : I leave my cause in thy hands.’ Praise is considered as more prevalent with the gods than prayer, as the gods are mightily pleased with flattery. Some unite vows to their supplications, and promise to present to the god a handsome offering if he be propitious.

Another act of Hindoo devotion is meditation on the form of an idol. Mr. Hastings, in his prefatory letter to the *Gēeta*, says, the Rev. Mr. Maurice describes the bramhūns as devoting a cer-

^a Instead of hymns in honour of the gods, the Hindoos, at present, as has been already noticed, introduce before the idol little beside filthy songs. Some bramhūns acknowledge, that not a single Hindoo seeks in his religion any thing of a moral nature. A real Christian, when he approaches God, prays, ‘ Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me.’ ‘ Lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil.’ ‘ Give me neither poverty nor riches.’ ‘ Guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory.’ A Hindoo, when he supplicates his god, prays for riches, or for recovery from sickness, or for a son, or for revenge upon his enemy. Sometimes the worshipper places himself before the image in a sitting posture, and, closing his eyes, prays, ‘ Oh, god ! give me beauty, let me be praised, give me prosperity, give me a son, give me riches, give me long life, or, give me health, &c.’ The eldest female of the house, throwing her garment over her shoulder, and sitting on her hams, joining her hands, in the same manner, prays, ‘ O god ! preserve these my children, and my son’s wife ; do not suffer us to have sorrow again in our family, (referring to some death in the preceding year,) and then I will present offerings to thee every year :’ saying this, she prostrates herself before the image. Sometimes a woman, after bathing, stretches her arms towards the sun, and says, ‘ O god of day ! such a one has ill-treated me ; do thou afflict her. See ! I supplicate thee

tain period of time to the contemplation of the deity, his attributes, and the moral duties of life. The truth is, that in this Hindoo act of devotion there is not a vestige of reference to the divine attributes, nor to moral duty. The Hindoo rehearses in his mind the form of the god, his colour, the number of his heads, eyes, hands, &c. and nothing more.

Repeating the names of the gods, particularly of a person's guardian deity, is one of the most common, and is considered as one of the most efficacious acts of devotion prescribed in the shastrūs. The oftener the name is repeated, the greater the merit. Persons may be seen in the streets repeating these names either alone, or at work, or to a parrot; others, as they walk along, count the repetitions by the beads of their necklace, which they then hold in the hand.

A great number of prescribed ceremonies, called vrütüs, exist among the Hindoos, which are practised with the hope of obtaining some blessing: females chiefly attend to these ceremonies.

Fasting is another act of religious merit among the Hindoos. Some fasts are extremely severe, and a Hindoo who is very religious must often abstain from food. It is commended, not as an act of preparation for some duty, calling for great attention of mind, but as an instance of self-denial in honour of the gods, which is very pleasing to them. One man may fast for another, and the merit of the action is then transferred to the person paying and employing another in this work.

Gifts to bramhūns are highly meritorious, as might be expected in a system exclusively formed for their exaltation: the more costly the gift, the more valuable the promissory note,

without having touched or tasted food.' A poor man, in the presence of an image, sometimes prays, 'O god! fill me every day with food. I ask no more.'

drawn on heaven, and presented to the giver. Giving entertainments to bramhūns is also another action which procures heaven.

Hospitality to travellers is placed among the duties of the Hindoos, and is practised to a considerable extent, though the distinctions of cast destroy the feelings which should give efficacy to this excellent law. So completely do these distinctions destroy every generous and benevolent feeling, that many unfortunate creatures perish in the sight of those who are well able to relieve them, but who exonerate themselves from this duty, by urging, that they are of another cast: a bramhūn finds friends every where, but the cast has sunk the afflicted shōōdrū to the level of the beasts: when a bramhūn is relieved, however, he is not indebted to the benevolence of his countrymen, so much as to the dread which they feel lest neglect of a bramhūn should bring upon them the wrath of the gods.

Digging pools, planting trees for fruit or shade, making roads for pilgrims, &c. are other duties commanded by the shastrū, and practised by the modern Hindoos.

Reading and rehearsing the pooranūs are prescribed to the Hindoos as religious duties, and many attend to them at times in a very expensive manner.

Other ceremonies contrary to every principle of benevolence exist among this people, one of which is to repeat certain formulas, for the sake of injuring, removing, or destroying enemies. Here superstition is made an auxiliary to the most diabolical passions.

But what shall we say of the murder of widows on the funeral pile?—this too is an act of great piety. The priest assists the poor wretch, in her last moments, before she falls on the pile, with the formulas given by the Hindoo legislators; and, to complete this most horrible of all religious customs, the son of this wretched victim kindles the fire in the very face of the mother

who gave him birth. Can there possibly be a greater outrage on human nature? Is there any thing like it in all the records of the most wild and savage nations? The North American Indian proceeds with the utmost coolness, it is true, in the work of scalping and murder, but the victim is his enemy, taken in battle; here the victim is an innocent woman—a mother—a widow, her heart fresh bleeding under the loss of the companion of her youth—the murderer, her own child—dragged to the work by the *mild* bramhūn, who dances, and shouts, and drowns the cries of the family and the victim in the horrid sounds of the drum. Such is the balm which is here poured into the broken heart of the widow. Nor are these unheard of, unparalleled murders, perpetrated in the night, in some impenetrable forest; but in the presence of the whole population of India, in open day:—and oh! horrible, most horrible! not less than *five thousand* of these unfortunate women, it is supposed, are immolated every twelve months. I have heard that the son sometimes manifests a great reluctance to the deed^r, and that some of these human sacrifices are almost dead before they are touched by the flames^s. It is certain, that in many cases the family do much to prevent the female from being thus drawn into the flaming gulph; but such are the effects of superstition, and the influence of long-established customs, joined to the disgrace and terrors of a state of widowhood, that, in the first moments of grief and distraction for the loss of her husband, reason is overpowered, and the widow perishes on the funeral pile, the victim of grief, superstition, and dread. Many widows are buried alive with the corpses of their husbands^t.

^r The shastrū prescribes, that he should do it with his head turned from the pile. Kennett, describing the Roman funeral, says, ‘The next of blood performed the ceremony of lighting the pile, which they did with a torch, turning their face all the while the other way, as if it was done out of necessity and not willingly.’

^s These barbarous murderers say, that when a woman is thus frightened to death, the gods, charmed with her devotion, have taken her before she entered upon this holy act.

^t The following circumstance took place at Gondūl-parā, about 20

Voluntary suicide is not only practised to a dreadful extent among the Hindoos, but the shastrûs positively recommend the

miles N. of Calcutta, on the 18th of March, 1813, and was communicated to the author by Capt. Kemp, an eye-witness. The description is nearly in his own words :—“ On Thursday last, at nine in the morning, Vishwânathû, one of our best workmen, who had been sick but a short time, was brought down to the river side to expire : he was placed, as is customary, on the bank, and a consultation held respecting the time he would die ; the astrologer predicted, that his dissolution was near at hand. The sick man was then immersed up to the middle in the river, and there kept for some time ; but death not being so near as was predicted, he was again placed on the beach, extended at full length, and exposed to a hot sun, where he continued the whole of the day, excepting at those intervals when it was supposed he was dying, when he was again immersed in the sacred stream. I visited him in the evening ; he was sensible, but had not the power of utterance ; he however was able to make signs with his hand, that he did not wish to drink the river water, which they kept almost continually pouring into his mouth by means of a small shell. He remained in this situation during the night : in the morning the immersions commenced, and were continued at intervals till about five in the evening, when he expired, or was literally murdered. His wife, a young woman about sixteen years of age, hearing of his death, came to the desperate resolution of being buried alive with the corpse. She was accompanied by her friends down to the beach where the body lay, where a small branch of the Mango tree was presented to her, which (as I understood) was setting a seal to her determination ; from which, after having accepted the branch, she could not retreat. I went to her, and questioned her with respect to the horrid act she was about to perform, whether it was voluntary or from persuasion : nothing of the latter appeared ; it was entirely her own desire. I spoke to her relations on the heinousness of the crime they were guilty of, in allowing the young creature thus to precipitate herself into the presence of her Creator uncalled for. Mrs. K. spoke both to the mother and the daughter a good deal, but all to no purpose. The mother declared, that it was her daughter's choice, who added, that she was determined to “ go the road her husband had gone.” There was not the least appearance of regret observable in the mother's countenance, or conduct. A woman, then, can “ forget her sucking child, and forsake the child of her womb :” the prophet seemed to think it only possible that there might exist such a monster, but here it was realized ; here was a monster of a mother, that could resign her child, the gift of a gracious Providence, and designed to be the comfort

crime, and promise heaven to the self-murderer, provided he die in the Ganges! Nay, the bramhūns, as well as persons of other casts, assist those who design thus to end life, of which the reader will find instances recorded in vol. ii. pp. 113, 114, 117. In some places of the Ganges, deemed peculiarly sacred and efficacious, infatuated devotees very frequently drown themselves. A respectable bramhūn assured the author, that in a stay of only two months at Allahabad, he saw about *thirty* persons drown themselves! Lepers are sometimes burnt alive with

and support of her old age;—could, without the least apparent emotion, consign this child alive to the tomb, and herself continue an unmoved spectator of the horrid deed. At eight P. M. the corpse, accompanied by this self-devoted victim, was conveyed to a place a little below our grounds, where I repaired, to behold the perpetration of a crime which I could scarcely believe possible to be committed by any human being. The corpse was laid on the earth by the river till a circular grave of about fifteen feet in circumference and five or six feet deep was prepared; and was then (after some formulas had been read) placed at the bottom of the grave in a sitting posture, with the face to the N. the nearest relation applying a lighted wisp of straw to the top of the head. The young widow now came forward, and having circumambulated the grave seven times, calling out *Hūree Būl! Hūree Būl!* in which she was joined by the surrounding crowd, descended into it. I then approached within a foot of the grave, to observe if any reluctance appeared in her countenance, or sorrow in that of her relations: in hers no alteration was perceptible; in theirs, there was the appearance of exultation. She placed herself in a sitting posture, with her face to the back of her husband, embracing the corpse with her left arm, and reclining her head on his shoulders; the other hand she placed over her own head, with her forefinger erect, which she moved in a circular direction. The earth was then deliberately put round them, two men being in the grave for the purpose of stamping it round the living and the dead, which they did as a gardener does around a plant newly transplanted, till the earth rose to a level with the surface, or two or three feet above the heads of the entombed. As her head was covered some time before the finger of her right hand, I had an opportunity of observing whether any regret was manifested; but the finger moved round in the same manner as at first, till the earth closed the scene. Not a parting tear was observed to be shed by any of her relations, till the crowd began to disperse, when the usual lamentations and howling commenced, without sorrow.

their own consent, to purify themselves from disease in the next birth. Others throw themselves under the wheels of Jügünnat'hü's ponderous car, and perish instantly. Thousands perish annually by disease and want on idolatrous pilgrimages; and notwithstanding the benevolent efforts of Mr. Duncan, it is pretty certain, that infanticide is still practised to a great extent in various parts of Hindoost'hanü, (see vol. ii. p. 123.) I have, in vol. ii. p. 127, ventured to offer a calculation respecting the probable number of persons who perish annually, the victims of the bramhinal superstition, and find, that it cannot be less than *Ten Thousand Five Hundred.*

Another very popular act of Hindoo devotion is that of visiting sacred places^u. There are few Hindoos grown up to mature age, who have not visited one or more of these places, the resort of pilgrims; many spend their whole lives in passing repeatedly from one end of Hindoost'hanü to the other as pilgrims: nor are these pilgrimages confined to the lower orders, householders and learned bramhüms are equally infatuated, and think it necessary to visit one or more of these spots for the purification of the soul before death. In some instances, a river; in others, a phenomenon in nature; and in others a famous idol, attracts the Hindoos. Large sums are expended by the rich, and by the poor their little all, in these journies, in

^u A journey to Benares, &c. and the performance of religious ceremonies there, are actions in the highest repute for religious merit amongst the Hindoos. Many sarkars in Calcutta indulge the hope, that they shall remove all the sins they commit in the service of Europeans (which every one knows are neither few nor small) by a journey to Benares, before they die. The Hindoo pündits declare, that even Europeans, dying at Benares, though they may have lived all their days upon cow's flesh, will certainly obtain absorption into Brümhü. On this subject, they quote a couplet, in which Benares is compared to a loose female, who receives all, and destroys their desire of sin, by quenching their appetites. The Hindoo learned men also admit, that Englishmen may partake of the blessings of their religion in two other instances, viz. if they become firm believers in Gunga, or die at Jügünnat'hü-kshétrü. In all other respects, the Hindoo heavens are all shut against eaters of cow's flesh.

the fees to the bramhūns, and in expenses at the sacred place. I have given an account of the ceremonies preparatory to the pilgrimage, as well as of those which are performed when the pilgrims arrive at the consecrated place; to which are also added particulars of the most frequented of these haunts of superstition.

For the expiation of sin, many different methods of atonement are prescribed in the Hindoo writings; many of which, however, have fallen into disuse.

Lest the observance of all these acts of religious homage should fail to secure happiness in a future state, the Hindoos are taught to repeat the names of the gods in their last hours; and are also enjoined to make presents to the bramhūns, especially to their spiritual guides: their relations also immerse the body of a diseased person up to the middle in the Ganges, and pour copiously of this sacred water into the dying man.

To procure relief for the wandering spirit after death, they make to it offerings of rice, &c. in a religious ceremony, almost universally attended to, called the shraddhū, and on which very frequently a rich man expends not less than 3 or 400,000 roopees. To make this offering at Gūya, is supposed to be attended with the certain deliverance of the deceased from all sorrow*.

The pooranūs teach, that after death the soul becomes united to an aërial body, and passes to the seat of judgment, where it is

* 'Ah!' said a Hindoo one day, in the hearing of the author, lamenting the catastrophe, 'it is not every one, even of those who set out for Gūya, who reaches the place.' Another Hindoo, in the presence of the author, reproving a young bramhūn, who refused to afford pecuniary help to his aged infirm parent, asked him, if this was not the grand reason why a person entered into the marriage state, that he might have a son, who, by offerings at Gūya, might procure for him happiness after death?

tried by Yümü, the Indian Pluto, who decides upon its future destiny. It, however, remains in this aerial vehicle, till the last shraddhü is performed, twelve months after death; when it passes into happiness or misery, according to the sentence of Yümü.

The same works teach, that there are many places of happiness for the devout, as well as of misery for the wicked; that God begins to reward in this life those who have performed works of merit, and punishes the wicked here by various afflictions; that indeed all present events, prosperous or adverse, are the rewards or punishments inevitably connected with merit or demerit, either in a preceding birth, or in the present life; that where merit preponderates, the person, after expiating sin by death and by sufferings in hell, rises to a higher birth, or ascends to the heaven of his guardian deity.

The joys of the Hindoo heavens are represented as wholly sensual, and the miseries of the wicked as consisting in corporal punishment: the descriptions of the former disgust a chaste mind by their grossness, and those given of the latter offend the feelings by their brutal literality.

Anxious to obtain the CONFESSION OF FAITH of a BRAMHUN, from his own pen, I solicited this of a man of superior understanding, and I here give a translation of this article:—

* God is invisible, independent, ever-living, glorious, uncorrupt, all-wise, the ever-blessed, the almighty; his perfections are indescribable, and past finding out; he rules over all, supports all, destroys all, and remains after the destruction of all; there is none like him; he is silence; he is free from passion, from birth, &c. from increase and decrease, from fatigue, the need of refreshment, &c. He possesses the power of infinite diminution, and lightness, and is the soul of all.

* He created, and then entered into, all things, in which he

exists in two ways, untouched by matter, and receiving the fruits of practice^y. He now assumes visible forms, for the sake of engaging the minds of mankind. The different gods are parts of God, though his essence remains undiminished, as rays of light leave the sun his undiminished splendour. He created the gods to perform those things in the government of the world of which man was incapable. Some gods are parts of other gods, and there are deities of still inferior powers. If it be asked, why God himself does not govern the world, the answer is, that it might subject him to exposure, and he chooses to be concealed: he therefore governs by the gods, who are emanations from the one God, possessing a portion of his power: he who worships the gods as the one God, substantially worships God. The gods are helpful to men in all human affairs, but they are not friendly to those who seek final absorption; being jealous lest, instead of attaining absorption, they should become gods, and rival them.

‘ Religious ceremonies procure a fund of merit to the performer, which raises him in every future birth, and at length advances him to heaven, (where he enjoys happiness for a limited period,) or carries him towards final absorption.

‘ Happiness in actual enjoyment is the fruit of the meritorious works of preceding births; but very splendid acts of merit procure exaltation even in the birth in which they are performed. So, the misery which a person is now enduring, is the fruit of crimes in a former birth: enormous crimes however meet with punishment in the life in which they are committed. The miseries of a future state arise out of sins unremoved by former sufferings: an inanimate state, and that of reptiles, are also called

^y Here an objection presses hard on the bramhūn, that it is God, or Spirit, then, in matter, that suffers, since matter cannot suffer. To this he answers, that the heart, though it be inanimate, and, in consequence, unconscious matter, by its nearness to spirit, becomes capable of joy and sorrow, and that this is the sufferer.

states of suffering. Absorption can be obtained only by qualifications acquired on earth; and to obtain this, even an inhabitant of heaven must be born on earth. A person may sink to earth again by crimes committed in heaven. The joys of heaven arise only from the gratification of the senses. A person raised to heaven is considered as a god.

‘ Every ceremony of the Hindoo religion is either accompanied by a general prayer for some good, or is done from pure devotion, without hope of reward; or from a principle of obedience to the shastrū, which has promised certain blessings on the performance of such and such religious actions.

‘ Various sacrifices are commanded, but the most common one at present is the burnt-offering with clarified butter, &c. It is performed to procure heaven.—The worship of the gods is, speaking generally, followed by benefits in a future state, as the prayers, praise, and offerings, please the gods.—Repeating the names of the gods procures heaven, for the name of god is like fire, which devours every combustible.—Bathing is the means of purification before religious services, and when attended to in sacred places, merits heaven.—Gifts to the poor, and to persons of merit, and losing life to save another, are actions highly meritorious, and procure for the person future happiness.—Fasting is an act of merit, as the person refuses food in devotion to the gods.—Vows to the gods procure heaven.—Praise offered to the gods in songs, is efficacious in procuring future happiness.—Visiting holy places, a spiritual guide, a father or a mother, destroys all sin.—Compassion, forbearance, tenderness, (regarding the shedding of blood,) speaking truth, entertaining strangers, becoming the refuge of the oppressed, planting trees, cutting pools of water, making flights of steps to holy rivers, and roads to holy places, giving water to the thirsty, building temples and lodging-houses for travellers, hearing the praise of the gods or a sacred book, &c. are actions which merit heaven.—Religious austerities are useful to subdue the passions, and raise the mind to a pure state. These austerities are rewarded either by heaven or absorption.’

Thus far this bramhinal Confession of Faith. Its author has scarcely noticed the amazing efficacy ascribed to religious abstraction, and the austerities practiced by anchorites, though the doctrine of the védüs evidently favours an ascetic life. Indeed, retirement from the world and abstraction of mind, assisted by bodily austerities, is considered as the direct way to final beatitude; yet it is not denied, but that a person who continues in a secular state, may, by performing the duties of his religion, accelerate his approach, either in this or some future birth, to divine destiny. The yogēē being thus exalted in the Hindoo system of theology, and in consequence honoured by his countrymen, it has become very common to embrace the life of a religious mendicant; to do which, indeed, among an idle, effeminate, and dissolute people, there are many inducements very different from those of a religious nature: disappointments in life, disagreeable domestic occurrences, wandering propensities, illicit connections, and very often a wish to procure impunity in the commission of flagrant crimes*, induce many to embrace such a life. Perhaps there is not a single instance at present known, of a person's becoming an ascetic from the pure desire of absorption. In cases where there is the greatest appearance of such a desire, the hermit possesses a motive no higher than that of exemption from the troubles of mortal existence. I have given in this work an account of nearly twenty orders of mendicants, (vol. ii. p. 190, &c.) the followers of different deities: these are the scourge of the country, though the legitimate offspring of this baneful superstition. Nor need we now expect to see realized the description of a yogēē as laid down in the shastrū: this description never was realized; those who have received the highest fame as yogēēs, were as corrupt, perhaps, as the present wretched imitators of these austerities. Many actions are attributed to them which put human nature to the blush.

* I have noticed in vol. ii. p. 189 the fact, that many hordes of mendicants are armed, and live by public plunder; but perhaps there are quite as many secret robbers to be found in the garb of religious mendicants. Since this fact has become more generally known, many have suffered the punishment of their crimes.